

# COGNITIVE DISSONANCE IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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Cognitive Dissonance occurs when one's personal identity is challenged to the extent that information contradicting one's identity is discarded, usually by *theological extension*\* or *eisegesis*\*\*.

Here are examples with the discarded information:

1. One believes eternal life is obtained by believing and accepting Christ, his deity, atoning death, and physical resurrection.

**Discarded Information:** "Baptism now saves you also." – 1 Peter 3:21

2. One believes Christ is not deity.

**Discarded Information:** "My Lord and my God." – Thomas to Jesus in John 20:28.

3. One believes pouring or sprinkling are valid substitutes for immersion baptism.

**Discarded Information:** "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." – Romans 6:4

4. One believes the wine in the Eucharist is changed by the words "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood."

**Discarded Information:** After saying the cup is His blood, Jesus said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until....." – in Matthew 26:29.

5. One believes hell is the final annihilation of the wicked.

**Discarded Information:** "And if your eye causes you to fall into sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.'" – Mark 9:47-48

6. One should not fear God.

**Discarded Information:** "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." – Matthew 10:28

7. Calling on the Lord is a prayer.

**Discarded Information:** 21 "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'....

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." - Acts 2:21, 36-38

8. All human beings are conceived in sin because of sin or guilt inherited from Adam and Eve.

**Discarded Information:** "The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them." – Ezekiel 18:20

9. Peter was appointed by Christ to be head of the church on earth.

**Discarded Information:** Neither Peter himself nor any New Testament writer refers to Peter as head of the church on earth.

**Theological Extension** – elaboration of the meaning of a text resulting in altering the meaning.

**Eisegesis** - occurs when a reader interprets a text rather than allowing the text to communicate meaning.